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imagery analysis report

Soviet Military Readiness in the Transcaucasus Military District, USSR (S)

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SOVIET MILITARY READINESS IN THE TRANSCAUCASUS MILITARY DISTRICT, USSR (S)

1. (S/D) Imagery analysis of the military forces deployed in the Transcaucasus region of the USSR has revealed a uniformly higher level of readiness than was evident a year ago. This appears to be the result of positive efforts to improve these forces. An increase in intelligence collection has also resulted in a better understanding of their current posture. This report is a compilation of the imagery-derived aspects of Soviet readiness in this region and is supplemented by tables on command, control, and communications and intelligence (C3I), ground forces, and air forces. Five maps and ten photographs are included in this report.

2. [] Transcaucasus region forces have been assessed by DIA¹ as having the capability to conduct military operations to secure Iranian Azerbaijan but lacking substantial combat support and service support. It has been stated that operations from the Transcaucasus would be preceded by additional, detectable preparations prior to such operations.¹

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3. (S/D) Imagery analysis of the military forces in this region has revealed an increased readiness posture over the past year. This increase is attributed to qualitative measures taken by the Soviets to improve forces. NPIC's increased knowledge is also based on improved collection and recent study. Information derived from a comparative study of major Soviet mobilizations since 1968 suggests that all necessary combat, combat support, and service support elements for the initiation of hostilities are present. These forces lack only the apparent signatures of ordered full mobilization (e.g. establishment of mobile communications networks, dispersal of units, field deployment/dispersal of logistics, and infusion of reservists and civilian vehicles into military units).

DESCRIPTION

Command, Control, and Communications and Intelligence

4. (S/D) Observations of mobile and fixed C3I units and facilities (Figure 1) have revealed the presence of the essential sophisticated communications systems/equipment necessary to create a Front-level communications network/system. Table 1 lists the currently known types and locations of advanced mobile electronics equipment identified in the Transcaucasus Military District (MD) since []. The command levels associated with these equipments and the verification dates of presence are also included.

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5. (S/D) During the past year, C3I exercise activity (Figures 2 through 5) in this region occurred at all command levels observed. Significant exercises are listed in Table 2. Photographic coverage of the Transcaucasus has increased since the Iranian hostage crisis and the Afghanistan invasion.

6. (S/D) Command and control facilities have been recently identified. A possible command post and government control center for the Georgian SSR has been identified approximately 12 nautical miles north-northwest of Tbilisi at 41-53-15N 044-45-38E. This facility probably performs the same functions as the site identified for the Armenian SSR at Nor Gekhi []. The Georgian facility has been under construction since 1976 and reflects long-term Soviet concern for continuity of government in the Transcaucasus and other regions of the USSR. A probable Soviet Air Force command post has been identified in the same general area (41-50-30N 044-40-50E) and has been established since at least March 1978.

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Ground Forces

7. (S/D) Transcaucasus MD ground forces units (Figure 6) received additional and new equipment during the past year. Several organizational changes were also observed. Units at all command levels were observed in training during this timeframe. Combined-arms field training exercises on a large scale were not observed, but the profile of units observed in training indicates active training programs in combat (all levels) units, communications units, air defense troops, diversionary/reconnaissance troops, and non-divisional artillery (Figures 7 through 9). Table 3 lists observed ground forces training exercises (except communications, Table 1).

8. (S/D) Significant qualitative improvements in equipment and organization and basing changes have been observed in frontal, army/corps, and divisional units.

Front-level

- The MD-subordinate motorized rifle division (MRD) at Tbilisi received BMP armored personnel carriers (APCs). It is believed that at least a portion of the BTR-60 APCs remained.
- The AAA division moved from Lagodekhi approximately 20 nm south to Tsteli Tskaro between November 1979 and May 1980.
- Front artillery assets were observed training in the Rustavi Training Area; 240mm self-propelled mortars were involved in this training. These weapons may indicate either the existence of a currently unlocated heavy/high-powered artillery brigade in the MD or the training of a reinforcing unit from the interior MDs/RVGK assets.

(Continued p. 10)

SECRET**Table 1. Advanced Mobile Communications and Electronics Equipment Identified in Transcaucasus MD Since []**

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| COMMAND LEVEL | COMSAT* | KH-1 | TWIN PAN | R-406 | R-412 | TWIN EAR | R-410 | R-410M | R-136 | FIX 24 | TALL RODS | LGE DO EL-01 | DO EL-05 | R-834 P | GER-EL-01 RADAR |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------|-----------------|
| (Front/Higher Level) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rustavi AL-2 | x (Feb 80) | | | | x (May 80) | x (Jun 79) | | | x (May 80) | x (May 80) | | | | | |
| Tbilisi AL-16 | x (Mar 80) | x (Aug 79) | | | | | | | x (Nov 79) | | | | | | |
| Tbilisi Tng AR 4 | | x** (Jun 80) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rustavi AL-4 | x (Aug 80) | | | | x (Aug 80) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tanrykulular AL-1 | | | | | x (Aug 80) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kobi Tropo Sta | | | | | x (Aug 80) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tbilisi Ord/Mun | | | x (Jun 80) | | | | | | | | | x (Jul 80) | | | |
| Tbilis AL-13 | | | | | | | | | x (Mar 80) | x (Aug 79) | | | | | |
| Stepanakert AL-1 | | | | | | | | | | | x (Jun 79) | | x (Jun 79) | | |
| Baku Add/Bnk/Hd | x (Aug 80) | | | x (Aug 80) | x (Aug 80) | | x (Aug 80) | | | | | | | | |
| Sungait AW Fac*** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x (Jul 80) |
| Army Level | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 Army Area | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Baku AL-2 | | | | | | | | | x (Apr 80) | x (May 80) | x (May 80) | | | | |
| Baku Tng Ar | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| WNW 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Baku-Binguday | | | | | x (May 80) | x (Apr 80) | | | | | | | | | |
| Nakhichevan | | | | | | x (Jun 80) | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 Army Area | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Yerevan AL-6 | | | | | | | x (Mar 80) | | | | | | | | |
| Artashat | | | | | | x (Jul 80) | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 Corps Area | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kutaist AL-8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kutaist AL-7 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kirovakan M Bks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Seen in exercises since 1977

**KH-1 may have moved to Tbilisi Tng Area 4 from Tbilisi AL-10

***Sungait AW Radar Fac is within the PVO Strany network

Table 2. Number of Observed Exercises*This table in its entirety is classified SECRET/WNINTEL*

| | Gen Staff | Front | Army | Corps | Div | Unsubord |
|--------|-----------|-------|------|-------|-----|----------|
| Aug 80 | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| Jul 80 | | 3 | 1 | 2 | | |
| Jun 80 | | 3 | | | 1 | |
| May 80 | | 3 | 5 | | 2 | 1 |
| Apr 80 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| Mar 80 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | |
| Feb 80 | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Jan 80 | | | | | 1 | |
| Dec 79 | | | | | | |
| Nov 79 | | 1 | | | | |
| Oct 79 | | | | | | |
| Sep 79 | | | | | | |
| Aug 79 | | | | | | 1 |
| Jul 79 | | | 1 | | | |
| Jun 79 | | | 1 | | | |



FIGURE 1. LOCATION MAP OF COMMAND, CONTROL, AND COMMUNICATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE UNITS IN TRANSCAUCASUS MD, USSR

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Table 3.
Training Exercises Observed in Transcaucasus MD (Jul 79—Jul 80)

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| Period | COMMAND LEVEL* | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|---------|------|------------|---------|------|----------|---------|
| | Front/Higher | | | Army Corps | | | Division | |
| | CBT | CBT SPT | SPEC | CBT | CBT SPT | SPEC | CBT | CBT SPT |
| May—Jul 80 | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X |
| Feb—Apr 80 | X | | | X | X | | X | X |
| Nov 79—Jan 80 | | | | | | | X | |
| Jul—Oct 79 | X | | | X | X | X | X | |
| (same exercise) | | | | | | | | |

Notes*

Front/higher units

Combat includes: Front-level SCUD, SCALEBOARD, and SA-4 brigades; high-powered artillery brigade; and airmobile brigade

Combat Support includes: Mobilization of military and civil motor transport (associated with harvest mobilization)

Special includes: Diversionary/reconnaissance brigade; chemical brigade

Army/corps units

Combat includes: Non-divisional artillery

Combat Support includes: Combat support and service support associated with combat; special units

Special includes: Chemical battalion

Division units

Combat includes: Transcaucasus MD-subordinate division and all (army subordinate) other divisions; air defense

Combat support includes: Divisional and regimental assets observed with maneuver unit training

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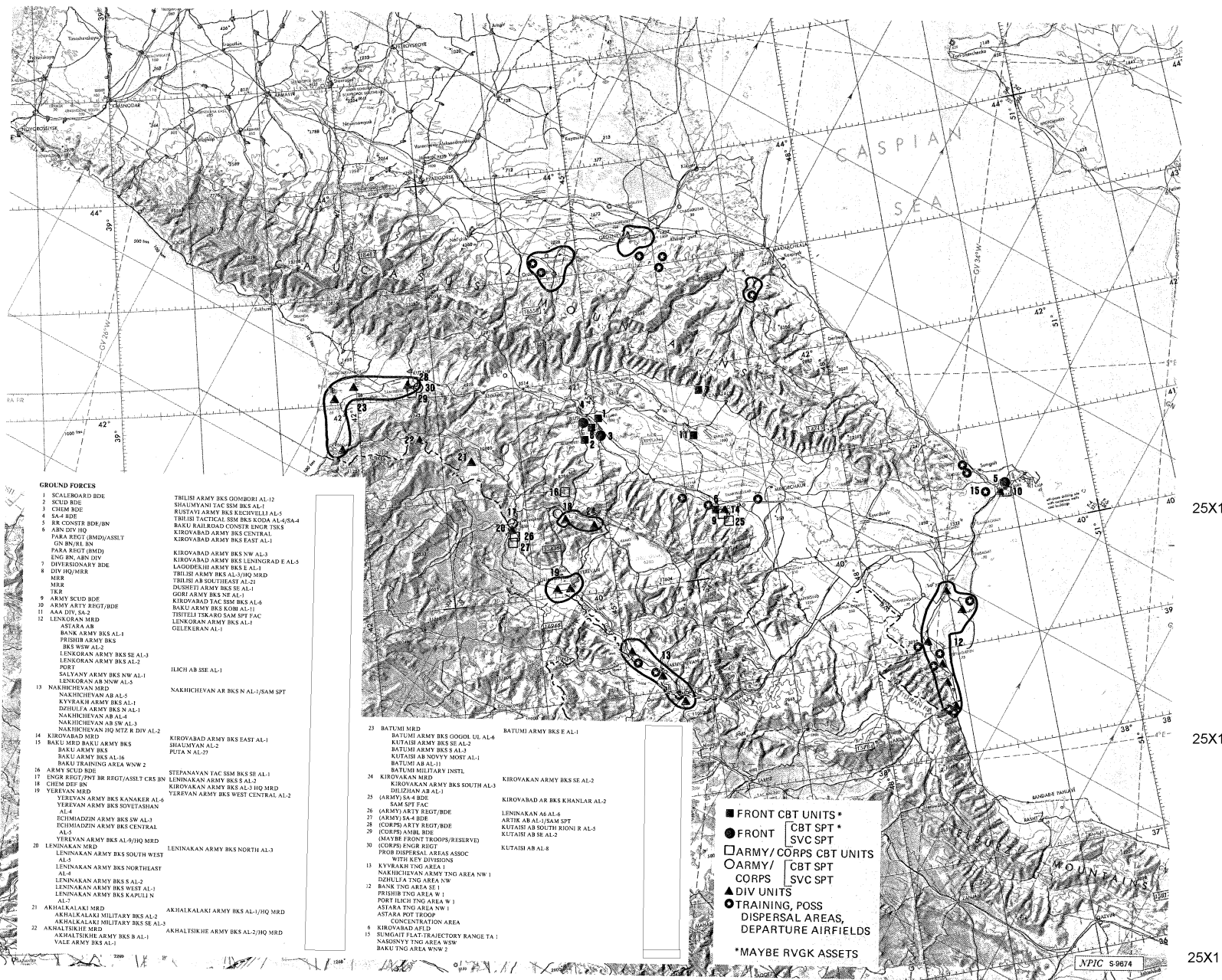


FIGURE 6. LOCATION MAP OF GROUND FORCES IN THE TRANSCAUCASUS

- 8 -
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Army-Level

—The 4th Army was confirmed as having a chemical defense battalion (Agdam Army Barracks, BE [redacted]) 25X1

Division-level

- BTR-70 APCs replaced BTR-152 APCs in the Dzulfu Motorized Rifle Regiment (MRR) of the Nakhichevan Division (4th Army). One MRR (Nakhichevan) of this division was still equipped with BTR-152 APCs as were the other divisions in the Transcaucasus MD.
- A BTR-60-equipped MRR in the Baku MRD (4th Army) was converted to a BMP-equipped MRR. The Leninakan MRD retained its BMP-equipped MRR.
- The Leninakan MRD (7th Army) SA-6 regiment was upgraded with the SA-11 missile. The Akhaltsikhe MRD has also received the SA-11 missile.
- The Akhaltsikhe MRD (31st Corps) was issued BTR-70 APCs (Akhaltsikhe Army Barracks AL-2/Headquarters MRD; [redacted]) 25X1

Air Forces (Figures 10 and 11)

9. (S/D) No significant changes were observed at 18 PVO or long-range aviation (LRA) bases in this region. Changes were observed in Frontal Aviation Forces (Table 4).

Logistics (Figures 12 through 14)

10. (S/D) The Transcaucasus logistics infrastructure is well developed and, if adequately stocked, is capable of providing critical logistics (nuclear, fuels, and ammunition) in its present status and configuration. All critical logistics facilities are echeloned in depth along two axes (a major axis, Tbilisi-Yerevan-Nakhichevan, and a secondary axis, Baku-Lenkoran) and on three lateral, supplementary internal routes (Batumi-Kutaisi-Akhaltsikhe-Leninakan; Batumi-Tbilisi-Kirovabad-Baku; and Baku-Nakhichevan). These routes are well developed in spite of difficult terrain compartmentation. The logistics installations are positioned on and dependent on this internal network for effectiveness.

(Continued p. 15)

Table 4.
Changes Observed in Frontal Aviation Forces

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Unit and Aircraft Changes

| Location | Activity | |
|--|---|--------------|
| Tbilisi-Vaziani Airfield [redacted] | FITTER H reconnaissance squadron (Apr 79) was observed in FISHBED reconnaissance regiment area | 25X1 |
| Tbilisi-Vaziani Airfield [redacted] | FLOGGER deployed as probable replacement for FISHBED, Apr 80 | 25X1 |
| Zemo-Kedi Airfield [redacted] | FITTER squadron deployed/added to a mixed FITTER regiment, Jun 79 | 25X1 |
| Sital-Chay Airfield [redacted] | Variable-geometry-wing FITTER regiment replaced FITTER A regiment, Apr 80 | 25X1 |
| Tsulukidze Heliport [redacted] | FLOGGER G unit present Jun 80 | |
| | An approximate 40% reduction in observed aircraft since Dec 79; airmobile training was conducted in Aug 79 at Tskhinvali South Afd [redacted] with airmobile bde (Kutaisi); airmobile bde was observed conducting a rail movement in Mar 80 | 25X1 25X1 |

Support Facility Changes

| | | |
|--|--|------|
| Tbilisi-Vaziani Airfield [redacted] | Fueling apron enlarged on southeast end of runway; followed FITTER & FLOGGER deployments May 80 | 25X1 |
| Zemo-Kedi Airfield [redacted] | Type E tactical air launch missile (TALM) building ucon Apr 80 | 25X1 |
| Samtredia East Airfield [redacted] | Bunkers converted to TALM facility Jun 79 | 25X1 |
| Kirovabad Airfield [redacted] | Extensive improvements, Mar—Nov 79, included runway extension, new asphalt overruns, and a run-up pad; from Mar 79—Mar 80 auxiliary runway renovated | 25X1 |

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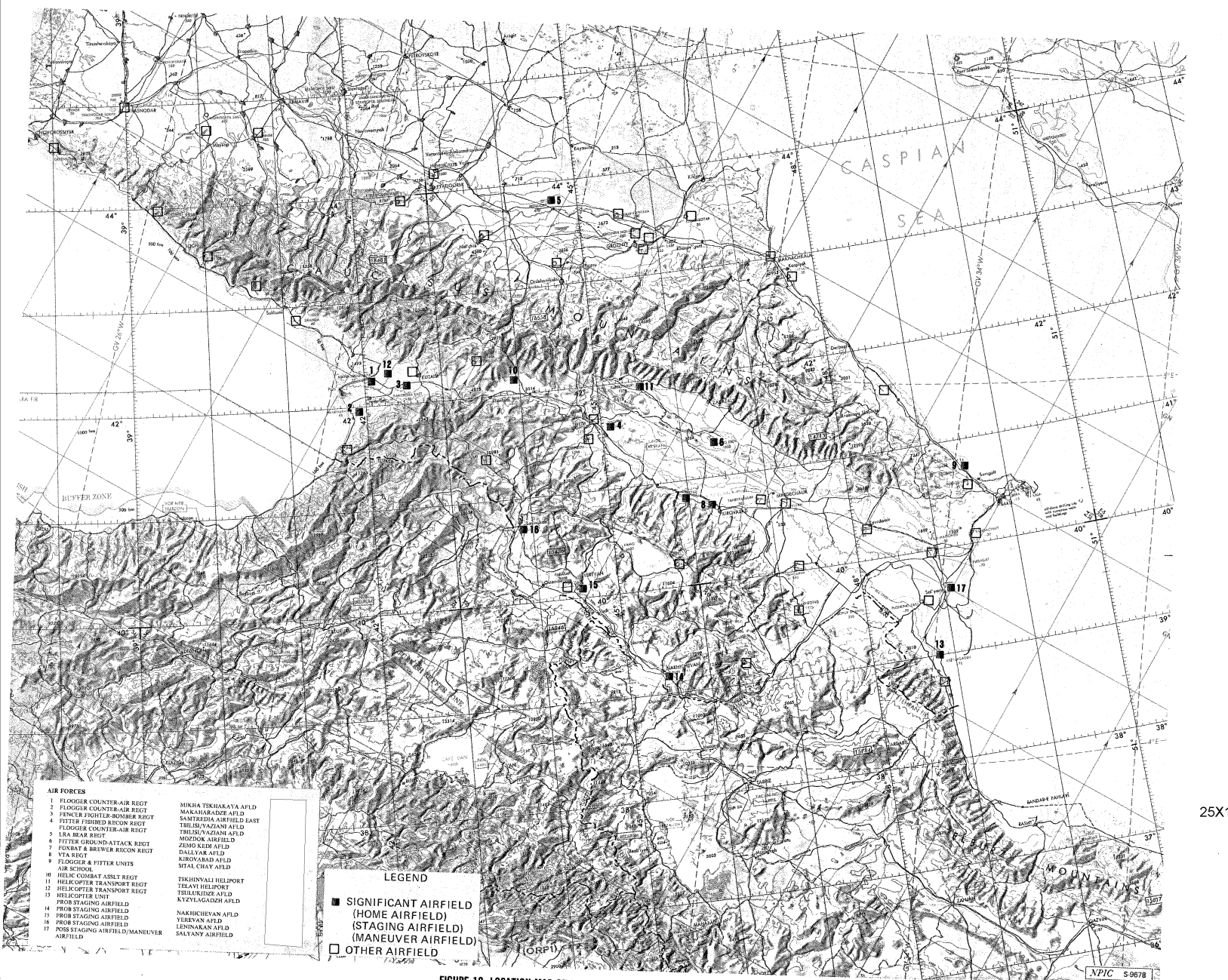
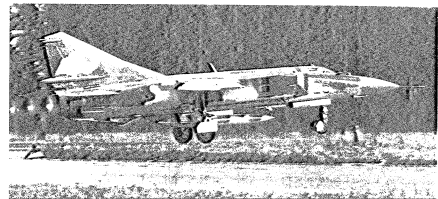
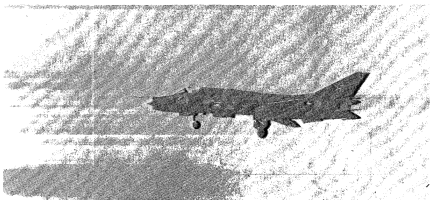


FIGURE 10. LOCATION MAP OF AIR FORCES IN THE TRANSCAUCASUS

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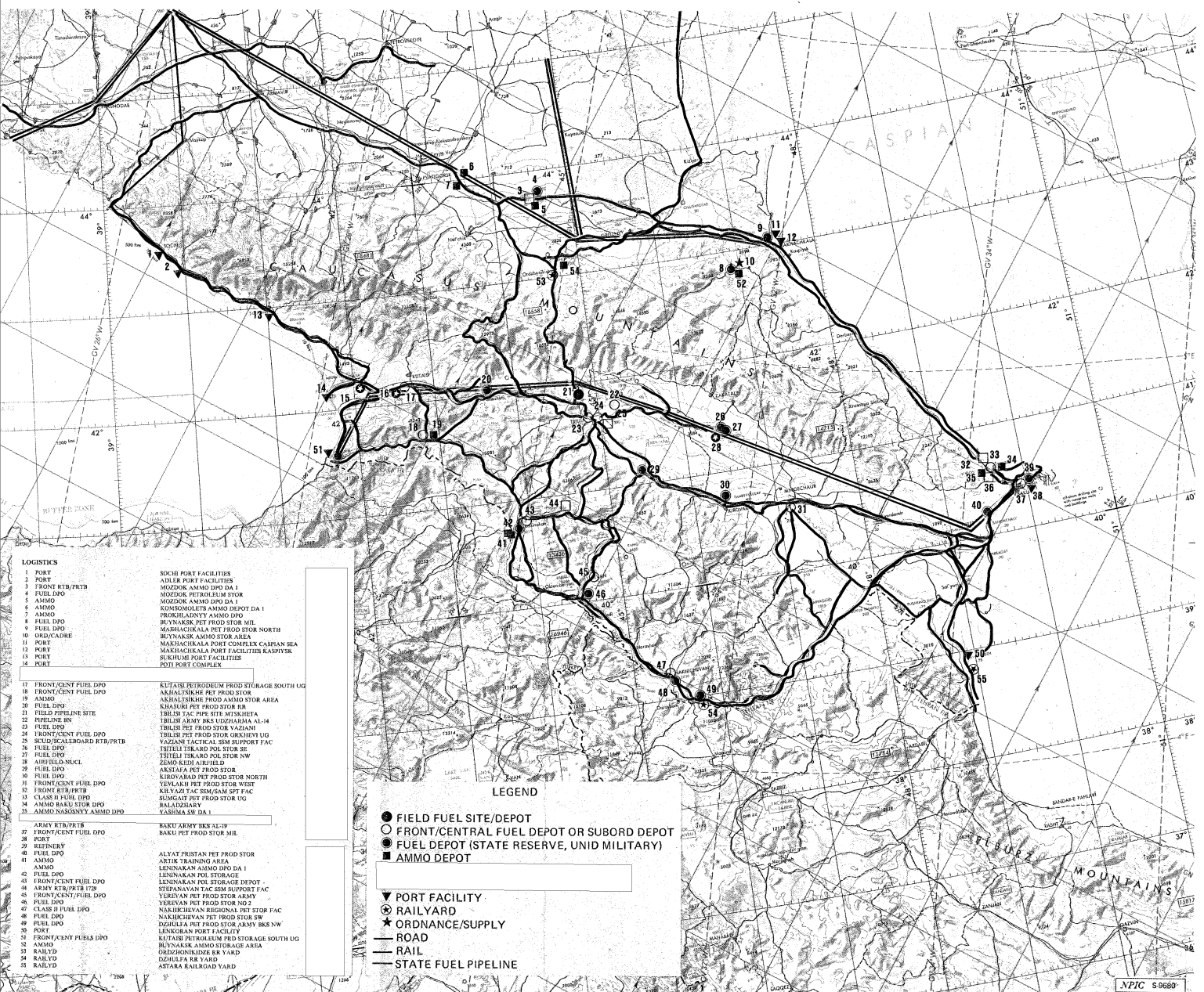


FIGURE 12. LOCATION MAP OF LOGISTICS IN THE TRANSCAUCASUS

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12. (S/D) The fuels support system for the Transcaucasus MD is also reported on for the first time in this report. It is coordinated with the state's permanent or stationary pipeline connecting the large refinery complexes at Batumi and Baku. In the vicinity of Tbilisi, a pipeline construction battalion [] and a Front/central fuels depot [] contain prepositioned tactical pipeline and technical support equipment to connect with the state system. Front/central fuel depots are at Leninakan (BE []) and Yerevan [] on the major axis. A class-II depot (subordinate to the Front/central depot in Tbilisi) is at Nakhichevan []. A Front/central depot is also on the secondary axis at Baku [] and a class-II depot is at Sumgait []. Other front/central depots are at Kutaisi [], Akhaltsikhe [] and Yevlakh ([]) which are positioned on lateral routes. These depots can be interconnected with tactical/field pipeline and can store and distribute missile propellants, aviation, and conventional fuels. Field fuel depots can be generated from these depots using collapsible storage containers in dispersed areas along internal routes or axes. Eight other depots of military significance (state reserves and/or military depots) are in the MD at Dzhulfa, Nakhichevan, Leninakan, Khashuri, Tsiteli-Tskaro, Kirovabad, Kazakh, and Alyat Pristan.

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13. (S/D) Between [] approximately 23 stacks of tactical pipeline sections were removed from the pipeline battalion at Tbilisi-Udzharma []. Elements of the unit continued to occupy the installation; however, on [] a field deployment of a pipeline construction company and 29 stacks of tactical pipeline were observed near Tbilisi-Mtskheta at 41-54-24N 044-44-32E (Figure 14). This area is traversed by the Batumi-Tbilisi-Baku state pipeline and may represent a positioning of pipeline and operating assets at a logical connecting point to establish the primary leg of a field trunk pipeline which would connect the state pipeline and refineries with Tbilisi-Orkhevi, Leninakan, Yerevan, and Nakhichevan at a minimum.

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14. (S/D) A probable independent medical detachment (OMO) has been identified at Baku []. This unit is in apparent reserve status.

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15. (S/D) During the period from May through July 1980, extensive motor transport and civil transport were observed throughout the region. This activity was observed in ten primary areas and was connected with harvest mobilization support. Vehicle and bivouac sites were positioned along the internal lines of communications. Some harvest-related activity was observed. This mobilization has occurred annually and represents a capability to mobilize and concentrate needed motor transport for the Transcaucasus region in wartime.

Airborne-Airlift Activity

16. (S/D) Several significant aspects of airborne forces and airlift (VTA) activity were observed during the past year. The parachute regiment at Baku departed from garrison in the late summer/early fall of 1979, and the permanent training facilities were removed. Additionally, the remaining two regiments were confirmed as being fully equipped with BMD APCs and a PVD-20 airborne ponton bridging unit was identified as subordinate to the 104th Guards Airborne Division (GAD). Training activity in this division was more extensive than in 1979; however, this may be due to increased coverage.

17. (S/D) The departure airfields which will likely be used by this division are Kirovabad Airfield (BE []) and the training/staging bases at Tanrykulular [] and at Dallyar []. Other air bases in the Kirovabad area are being studied as potential departure airfields as well.

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18. (S/D) The primary initial support for the 104th GAD in airlift would probably be provided by the VTA base at Kirovabad Airfield. With the exception of the period (from December 1979 through January 1980) when VTA was sustaining a maximum effort in support of the Afghanistan invasion, a constant number of at least 26 CUB aircraft was maintained at that base through mid-May 1980. Over 33 CUB were observed at this base on 39 of 40 coverages through [] substantially reduced CUB counts have been observed (with the exception of [] when 36 were present). This appears to be related to runway widening at Kirovabad and, since the 104th GAD continued to be observed in garrison, does not appear to be related to operations in the Transcaucasus region.

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Strategic Rocket Forces

19. (S/D) Since August 1979, there has been no change in the number of active launchers in the Ordzhonikidze MRBM/IRBM Division. Evidence suggests, however, that additional refire missiles may be present at Maykop MRBM Launch Site 1 []. This is based on the presence of six additional SS-4/-5 missile erectors and additional SS-5/-7 propellant transporters at that site. This activity is consistent with the consolidation of MRBM/IRBM forces throughout the Soviet Union.

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SECRET**SUMMARY**

20. (S/D) The military forces (Figure 15) and support in the Transcaucasus region are positioned on two strategic axes extending into Turkey and Iran (Tbilisi-Leninakan-Yerevan-Nakhichevan) and into Iran (Salyany-Lenkoran-Astara). A frontal rear area is in the Tbilisi-Mskheta-Vaziani complex and a front and army reserve area is in the Kirovabad-Mingeaur-Stepanakert-Lagodekhi area. A second army and frontal reserve area is in the Baku area. A corps sector with some frontal units is positioned between Sochi and Batumi on the Black Sea approaches to the Transcaucasus. All necessary combat, combat support, and service support to initiate hostilities are present and positioned to support frontal operations. Airfields and potential dispersal areas are available to facilitate staging and increased readiness. Strategic resupply can be effected on the rail and road internal communications routes assisted by well developed Black Sea and Caspian Sea ports.

REFERENCES**IMAGERY**

(S/D) All applicable satellite imagery acquired from [] was used in the preparation of this report. 25X1

MAPS OR CHARTS

DMAAC. Jet Navigation Chart, Sheet 22, ed 2, Feb 78 (UNCLASSIFIED)

DOCUMENT

1. DIA. Weekly Intelligence Summary, USSR-Eastern Europe, *Possible Strengthening of Soviet Forces in the Transcaucasus*, 28 Mar 80 (SECRET) [] 25X1

(S) Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. It was prepared by the Warsaw Pact Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC. The following individuals participated in writing specific portions of the report and are the principal points of contact on questions and queries.

| Point of Contact | Section of Report | Extension | |
|------------------|---|-----------|-------|
| | | Black | Green |
| [] | Coordination | [] | [] |
| | Command, Control, Communications and intelligence | | |
| | Ground Forces | | |
| | Air Forces | | |
| | Logistics (fuels) | | |
| | Logistics (theatre nuclear) | | |
| | Airborne Forces | | |
| | SRF MRBM/IRBM Forces | | |
| | Civil Defense | | |

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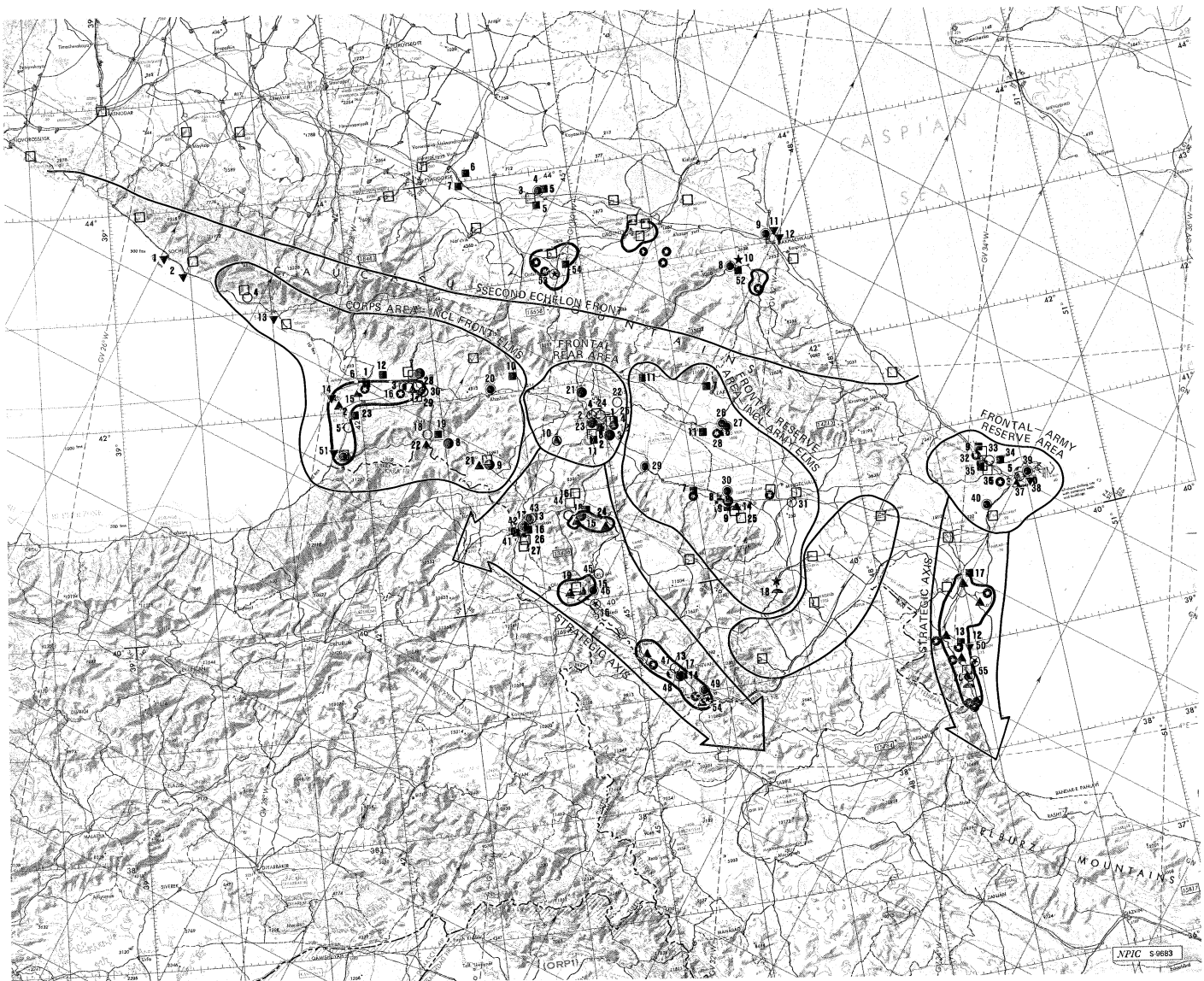


FIGURE 15. LOCATION MAP OF COMBINED MILITARY FORCES, TRANSCAUCASUS REGION

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